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SLAVERY.

BY A MARYLANDER.

ITS INSTITUTION AND ORIGIN. ITS STATUS UNDER
THE LAW AND UNDER THE GOSPEL. ITS
AGRICULTURAL, COMMERCIAL, AND
FINANCIAL, ASPECTS.

THE question of the abolition of Slavery is agitating the civilized world. It has impoverished many British subjects and ruined their colonies; it has brought our own country to the verge of dissolution and civil war. And the writer believes it is all in consequence of the misapprehension of the true origin and design of the institution; and so long as this misapprehension prevails, it will continue to agitate our country and the world.

The popular and erroneous opinion of Slavery is, that it is a sin, a violation of the law and will of God. If this were true, the writer would rather die than utter one word in its defence, and every Christian would be guilty in the sight of God, who owned a slave or did anything to perpetuate it. The writer believes that a clear knowledge of its institution and design, is the only thing that can give man an enlightened conscience, and create an enlightened public opinion on the subject, and help to quiet and adjust the disturbances and evils which have grown out of this misapprehension.

Many admirable speeches and sermons have been written recently in defence of Slavery, and much new light has been thrown on the subject; but in the writer's judgment, it has not yet been set forth in exactly the light in which the Word of God represents it. The fact is, that while millions of dollars have been spent in publishing abolition doctrines, scarcely anything has been said in defence of slavery; and the enemies of it have so long had the whole field to themselves, that many think there is nothing to be said in its favor.

Some have taken the ground that God *permits* it, and therefore it cannot be sin. This may be said of any sin, and therefore it would be *no proof* that it is not sinful. But Divine Revelation solemnly declares that *God is not the author of sin*; therefore, if He is the author of Slavery, it is not sin. And this last is the identical ground on which the Holy Scriptures set it forth to us. It is that God himself *instituted* it.

Slavery is compulsory labor under the will of another person, who is to receive the wages of his labor. All labor is the result of sin; it is the *entail* of the curse of God. Labor originated with the expulsion of Adam from Paradise. The ground was cursed for his first sin against his Heavenly Father, and he was compelled to get his living from it by the sweat of his brow.

So do we learn from the Bible, that when the human race began a new career in the posterity of Noah, that for the first sin of one of his sons, God *renewed* the curse of labor, and made it more onerous than it was originally, by connecting with it the degradation of *servitude*; the second curse was servile labor, and it was *instituted by God* for the sin of irreverence of an Earthly Father; it was designed to be perpetual until the end of time; and to be compulsory, that portions of the earth might be brought into cultivation, which otherwise would have remained forever unproductive. Thus there was a double moral and temporal object to be accomplished by God.

The first sin of man received a punishment which made the whole race feel how hateful sin must be to God; the second shewed that hatred more fully and clearly. So we see that God not only instituted Slavery, but He also made it to forever be a part of the moral probation of the human race, and to be a great lesson to the end of time of His abhorrence of sin.

The first mention of Slavery in the Bible is the institution of it in Ham, the son of Noah, immediately after the Deluge. The severity of his punishment, in putting his posterity in bondage to his brethren, making them personal property, and giving them a right to their bodies and the products of their labor, for such was its nature, had, as we have seen, two great objects to be accomplished in the moral and intellectual development of the race. It exempted one party from the corroding anxieties of labor, and left them free to obtain a higher intellectual and moral development. And it was also designed, by keeping this inferior race in connection with the superior, to prevent them from falling into heathenism, and utter loss of the knowledge of the true God. And these two results Slavery has steadily accomplished for four thousand years. It has been essential ever since to a high degree of civilized society. It is inwoven into the history, progress and development of the civil polity, agriculture, and commerce, of our world.

Under the Law there were *four classes* of servants. First, the *per-*

petual slave, of the posterity of Ham, who was to be forever subject to the other races—*Gen.* 9: 25. “A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren;” while Canaan, one branch of the servile posterity, was especially assigned to bondage to the posterity of Shem. The other kinds of Slavery under the Law were: Second—strangers either taken in war or bought with money; and the captors either kept them as their personal property or sold them for money. The third class was Hebrew slaves, who fell into poverty and sold themselves, or were sold from necessity by their parents. Thus we see that God permitted his own Covenant people to sell themselves, and to pass as chattels, or personal property, into the hands of their brethren, who were also his Covenant people. The fourth class was any persons who of their own free will and choice, sold themselves voluntarily into slavery.

Here, then, in the first class we have the root, and origin, and institution, of that identical slavery, and the very kind of slavery which now exists in America. All intelligent theologians agree, that the enlightened Christian races are the descendants of Shem; and ethnologists and naturalists are equally agreed, that the African races are the posterity of Ham.

The Hebrew slaves were bound only for six years; then they might be free; their masters could not retain them against their will. But if they voluntarily consented to remain in slavery, then their masters bored their ears with an awl, and they could not obtain their liberty except at the next year of Jubilee.

Five hundred years after this, in the time of the first of the Pharaohs, in Egypt, slaves of the posterity of Ham were numerous—*Eccod.* 9: 20; and from that day to this, in Egypt and Africa, that same posterity has been fulfilling the destiny marked out for it by God, under the burden of this curse.

Again, when God came down on Mt. Sinai, he more solemnly *re-instituted* this law. After making merciful provisions for the Israelites, who should fall into servitude, he declared that they might have perpetual bondmen and bondwomen of the heathen nations about them: “ye shall buy of them and of their families” “and ye shall take them as an *inheritance* for your children after you, to inherit them for a *possession*; they shall be your *bondmen forever*. *Leviticus*, 25: 45, 46.

Here, then, we have the institution of Slavery by God, and the establishment of the right of property in them by him as chattels, to descend as personal property from generation to generation, forever. And it must be borne in mind, that it was done by God from considerations personal to himself, having relation to his moral government on earth, of which we know comparatively nothing. This is the way Slavery stood under the Law; and as it had existed in the first form in the posterity of Ham; and thus it was when the Son of God appeared on the earth.

Let us then see how it stands under the Gospel. When the Son of God began his public ministry on earth, more than half the world was in slavery; and it was a slavery to which the worst features of the African Slave Trade have not a parallel; because there, death is deprecated and unavoidable; while the master then wantonly murdered his slaves, and even cut up fat ones to feed the fish in their ponds;* and whole families were killed without judge or trial, on the mere suspicion of crime. And the glad tidings He preached was "deliverance to captives;" but no intimation was given by him that Slavery is a sin; but, on the contrary, he taught the slaves to be faithful to their masters, and also subordinate.—*Luke*, 17: 7. And he performed several miracles on slaves; but we nowhere learn that he rebuked a Believer in Him for owning a slave, or that he ever advised a follower of his to let his servants go free. He knew why Slavery was instituted; knew that it was a part of a fallen race's probation; knew that the Father's plans for the development of the moral and physical condition of things on earth, could not be accomplished without it; knew that the trials of the slave would lead him to look for a better inheritance in the life to come. He knew why he had created one race superior to another, and that he had a right to do as he chose with his own. But he laid down a law in the Gospel—the right to hold slaves, and to keep them in a subordinate degree of knowledge, that they might be contented there.—*John*, 15: 15. And to prevent the master from abusing his power, he made another law—that every man should do as he would be done by.

But after the Holy Ghost came, and the Apostles were more fully enlightened, then we find them dwelling in detail on the subject, and by Divine direction, giving instructions respecting it, which prove that God not only designed that it should *continue* under the Christian dispensation, but also that man should not attempt to interfere with or to abolish it.

They commanded the slave and the master, each to do his duty in that state of life in which God had put them, and warned the Church and the world not to interfere with Slavery. And as if mere admonitions would not be sufficient, and foreseeing how pride of reason and fanaticism would lead men astray, as they are now doing, St. Paul gave a practical illustration of his teaching in the case of Onesimus. This slave had run away from his Christian master at Colosse. The master was a friend of St. Paul, and he met his slave at Rome, and converted him to Christianity. The slave was beyond the reach of his master, and of any law which could return him to bondage; and if slavery were unjustifiable, or it were lawful under any circumstances for a slave to retain the freedom he had so acquired, this would have been one. But instead of doing so, he prevailed on the fugitive to *return* to his master, and wrote a letter which the slave

* Vedius Pollio is said to have fattened the lampreys of his ponds with the flesh of his slaves.

carried to his master, Philemon, exhorting him to forgive and receive him—not now as a slave, but above a slave, “a brother beloved, especially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the *flesh* and in the Lord.”* That he went back to slavery is certain, because he was to be more profitable in the *flesh*; and St. Paul said if the slave owed Philemon anything, for loss of time during his absence, he must charge it to his account. And from it we learn, under the teaching of the Holy Ghost, that *it is not* unlawful for a Christian man to hold a Christian man as his slave and chattel, and to use his labor for himself. But the Gospel imposed a new tie. Philemon was no longer to value Onesimus, because he was his property, and valuable as a slave, but above a slave, “a brother beloved.” This was the new relationship which was to exist between master and servant; and it is a fact of history, that from that time onward the Gospel has been gradually ameliorating Slavery, and preparing and bringing the subjects of it under the blessings of Christ’s religion.

Slavery has been one of the means which God has used for bringing more than twenty millions of Africans to a knowledge of the Gospel, who would never have heard of the name of Jesus, but for its institution. These millions belong to the redeemed of God, and they will be of the number who are to chant his praise throughout eternity, for the very cause which darkened men are reviling the Word of God for teaching.

Nor is this all that the Gospel says in favor of Slavery. The same Apostle says: “Let as many servants”—and the Greek word means slaves, black and white, who were then bought and sold in the public markets—let these who are “under the yoke”—which implies hard bondage and a galling servitude—“count their masters worthy of all honor, that the *name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.*” If it were blasphemy then against God, to teach slaves to be dissatisfied, with that state of life in which He had put them, can it be otherwise now?

The Apostle here declares that Slavery is instituted by God, and could he have uttered such language, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, if he did not intend that it should *continue* in the world, under the Christian dispensation? And that there is no mistake in this interpretation we know; because he goes on to say, “and the servants that have Christian masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren.” That is, so far from expecting Christian masters to set them free, they were to regard it as a new obligation to them to be faithful servants. “*But rather do them service,*” said he, “because they are faithful and beloved.” God does here sanction slavery, and recognizes it to *endure* in the Christian church. And the Apostle continues, in these remarkable words: “These things **TEACH AND EXHORT.**” And this is not all. He also declares, “*If*

* Connections of the Universe.

any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ and to the doctrine which is according to Godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds."

Thus God's word teaches what will come from any attempt to meddle with His government of our world. And we see this prophecy fulfilled before our own eyes; our country at this very moment is in the state predicted by the Apostle, because men have interfered with His plans respecting the slaves, by trying to bring about their emancipation.

This Slavery is an inexplicable link in the chain of man's subjection to God's moral government, of which he knows but little; and his only safety lies in doing his duty as God has laid it down in the Gospel; and that is, to treat his servants as he would wish to be treated were their conditions reversed.

It is certain that the moral and physical condition of all the Africans in the United States has been vastly elevated by their transportation to this country. The distinction is a temporal one. It in no way hinders the salvation of master or slave; but, on the contrary, begets higher responsibilities and new and endearing relations between both parties, which never would have existed without the institution.

"It is probable that more than one-half of all the slaves in the United States are members of a church. Almost all of them are baptized. And there is no class of four millions, from the highest to the lowest, which has more consistent Christians, all things considered, than the slaves. Every Lord's day there may be seen in our Southern churches, masters and slaves bringing their children, *at the same time*, to the same font, to receive holy baptism, which makes them *One* in Christ, where there is neither bond nor free; and master and slave kneeling at the same altar, to eat the same Bread of Life, which is to fit them for citizenship in the same great everlasting Kingdom of God. And thousands of slaves realize this, and daily thank God for what short-sighted men denounce as sin.

"The Religion of Christ demands a cross! And who shall say that Slavery is not one of the great means, by which he is scourging these dark heathen, for he does scourge every son whom he receiveth, to himself."

That there are evils connected with Slavery, no one pretends to deny; but they are not such as render its abolition essential. There are great evils attending the collection of human beings into large cities; yet who would think of abolishing cities from the world because of their evils? The fact is, that in both cases the advantages vastly over-balance the evils.

Slavery is not an evil of itself, because God instituted it, and he cannot be the author of evil. The evils which attend it do not belong especially

to it; they exist where there is no Slavery; they belong to man's fallen nature and condition. While Slavery may exist, as it did in Abraham's family, and in many Christian families now in our Southern States, in connection with the highest purity and benevolence. It is man's duty here, as in everything else, to do what he can to ameliorate the evils which wicked men have added to it. It cannot be abolished by man without infinite peril to civil society, and to all the great interests which control the well-being, if not the very existence, of commerce and agriculture at the present time. To attempt to abolish it has thus far proved ruinous to the master and servant, wherever the experiment has been made; and from personal and satisfactory knowledge, I say that the moral and physical condition of the slave, where he emancipated himself in St. Domingo, and where he was freed by the Government in the British West India Islands, is very much worse than it was while they were slaves, and vastly below the present condition of American slaves. And it is ruinous, because it is an attempt to interfere with God's government of the earth; it is an attempt to take it out of his hands, and to assume that we know how to govern its affairs better than he does himself.

But there are many considerations now existing, which show that the welfare of the civilized world, its great commercial, agricultural, and financial relations, as well as the perpetuity and safety of existing free governments, require the continuance of Slavery.

It might be enough to simply refer to the financial convulsions, the paralyzing of commerce, and the ruptures of our own country within the last few weeks, to convince any thoughtful mind of the utter ruin which would overtake this nation if slavery were abolished. But all experiments for the abolition of domestic slavery have shown, that while it does not benefit the slave, ruins the master, disturbs civil governments, abridges agriculture and commerce, and the luxuries of life, and reacts in depressing all the means of support of the laborers of the whole civilized world. Let the labor of the slaves of these United States be interrupted for one year, and it would utterly ruin the whole commercial and manufacturing interests of the world.

The welfare of white laborers, who cannot work in tropical fields, but who must have cheap fabrics to clothe them, depends on the maintenance of slave labor. And let the production of cotton and sugar suddenly cease, and who can estimate the distress which would overtake the poor, which would fall on the operatives in factories, in agriculture, and in the mines of the whole world.

God has contrived the laws in nature, which produce the black man, and he has mercifully adapted him to his condition, for there is no other class of men on the globe so free from harassing cares and anxieties, so cheerful, and so happy, as the slave. It is dangerous always to tamper

with God's laws, the designs of which we do not understand; and the recent experiment in our land has brought us as a nation to the brink of civil war.

Recent examinations of the social condition of operatives throughout the civilized world, prove that the moral and physical condition of slaves in the United States is vastly better than a majority of the laborers.

The time came in the providence of God when the horrors of the slave trade were to be abolished. It had finished its work of bringing the race to America, and taking back civilization to Africa, and God raised the men and means to do it. And whenever domestic slavery shall have accomplished the great designs the Almighty Creator had in its institution, which the writer believes never will be until the end of time, then it will be abolished. It can no more be torn out of its connection with the condition of things in our world, than civil government or matrimony and the domestic government which grow out of it, can. Or if it could be destroyed by violence, it would produce evils vastly greater than those the mistaken men who desire to abolish it, now complain of. The evidence of this is clearly seen in the rapid and sudden paralysis of all kinds of business, and the recent reduction of the value of all kinds of property in our land.

There are ranks and grades in heaven; and on earth God has appointed divers races of men, some to *rule* and some to *obey*; and subordination is a law of all living things so far as man can see; and the slave is put in bondage by the same Divine Power which puts the king on the throne. And it is another Gospel than that preached by the Son of God, to teach slaves to be *discontented* with their condition, or the master that it is a sin to hold a slave.

And men only *compromise* God's word when they teach that he *permits* Slavery, because he *instituted* it, for purposes known to himself, having relation to man's future and eternal well-being, and of which man himself knows little or nothing.

Slavery is an explicable link in the chain of the connections of Time and Eternity, similar to man's bondage to sin; God instituted the former, he *permits* the latter; and man must be content to do his duty as God has pointed it out, in the best way he can, seeking help from Him who *alone* has power to grant it—the Author and Finisher of all things.

PUBLISHED BY J. P. DES FORGES, BOOKSELLER & STATIONER, 12 LIGHT-ST.

PRINTED BY SAMUEL S. MILLS, 122 BALTIMORE ST., BALTIMORE.

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